

‘Song: Go and catch a falling star’ John Donne

Language

- Highlight or underline all the imperatives in the first stanza. What common theme do all these words share? How might this relate to your understanding of the poem?
- Look up the words ‘falling’ and ‘star’. What are the different possible readings of this phrase? How do these readings fit into your understanding of the poem?
- Look up the words ‘true’ and ‘fair’. What are the different possible readings of this phrase? How does it relate to the rest of the poem?

Structure

- Each stanza ends with a full stop, making each stanza its own sentence. How is the structure of the sentence that makes up stanza one different to the next two? How does this affect our understanding of the speaker’s argument?
- How does the use of a comma after ‘Go’ establish the tone of the poem from the outset? What relationship does it establish between speaker and reader?
- The seventh and eighth lines are very short. How does this enjambment affect the tone of the poem? What might the effect be if these lines were joined into one?
- The final stanza ends with ‘two, or three’. Is the ‘three’ an afterthought or does it show a progression of time? You could also consider whether or not it shows an uncertainty on the speaker’s part?

Sound and rhythm

- After no alliteration previously, line ten has two instances in quick succession. What is the effect of this? Can you find an explanation in the progression of the speaker’s argument, or in the changing tone of the poem?
- The rhyme pattern of the poem is very regular, with no half or irregular rhyme. Why might this be? What is the effect of such perfect, considered rhyme on the overall feeling of the poem?
- Each stanza ends with a triplet of rhyme. An overabundance of rhyme can give a text a childish or light-hearted tone. Do you think this is the intended effect? Why or why not?